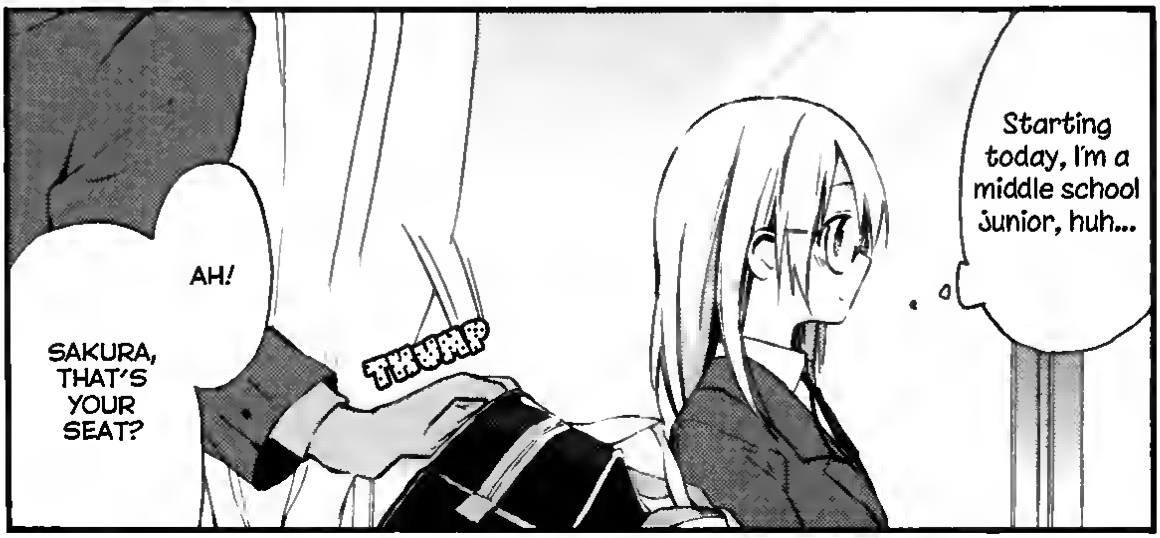
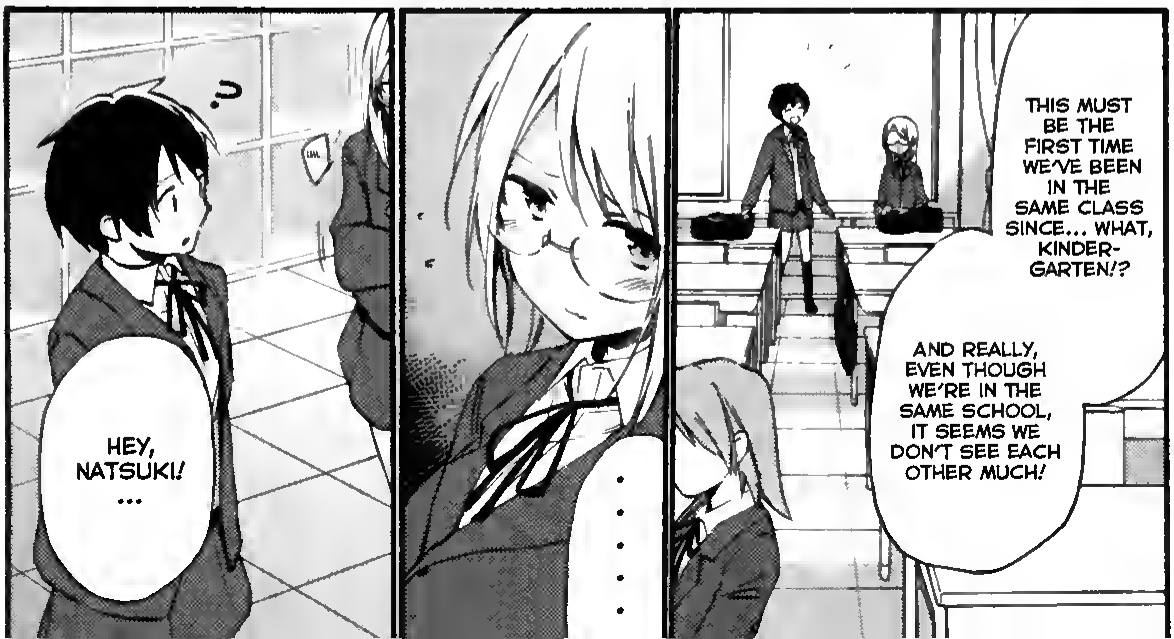
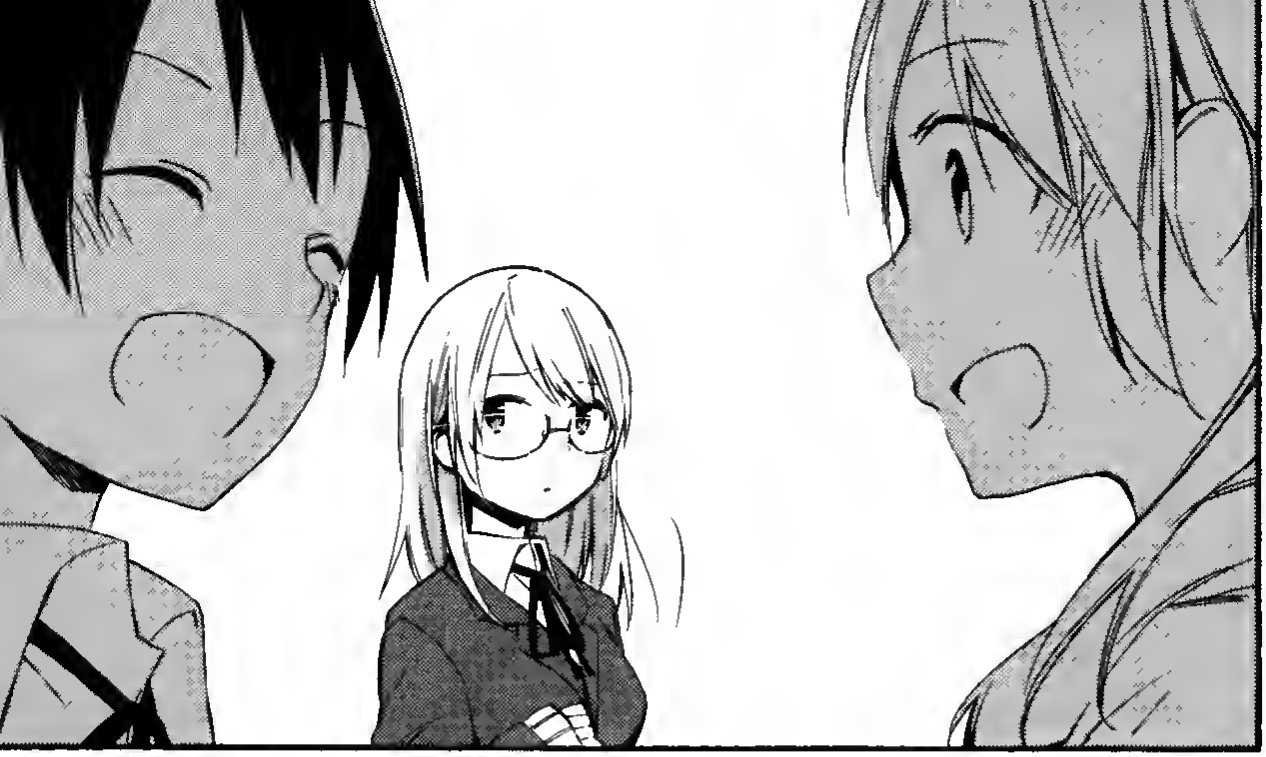
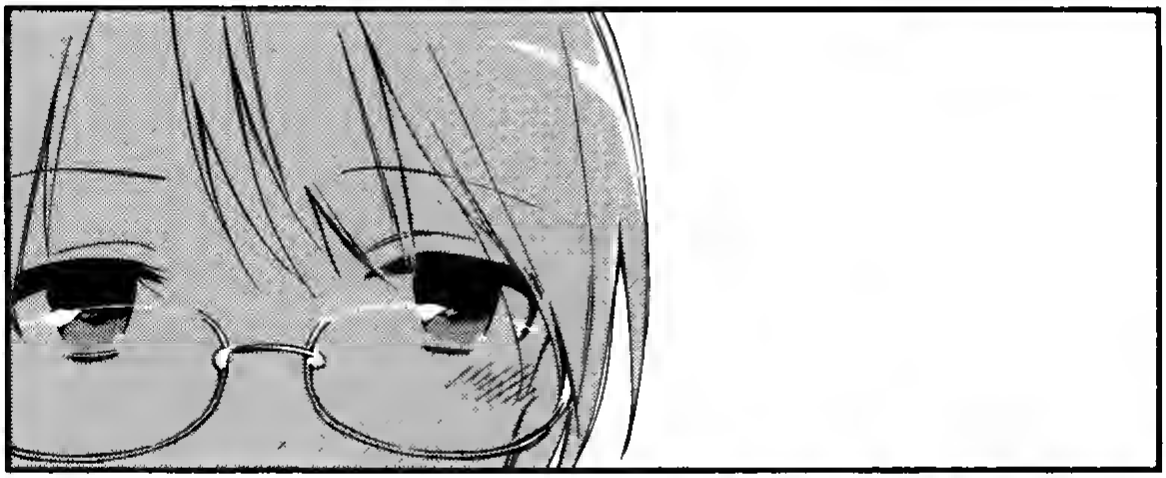
April.
Spring.
The fields and the mountains, and the vital workings of human beings as well,
have bestirred themselves and suddenly jumped to life.

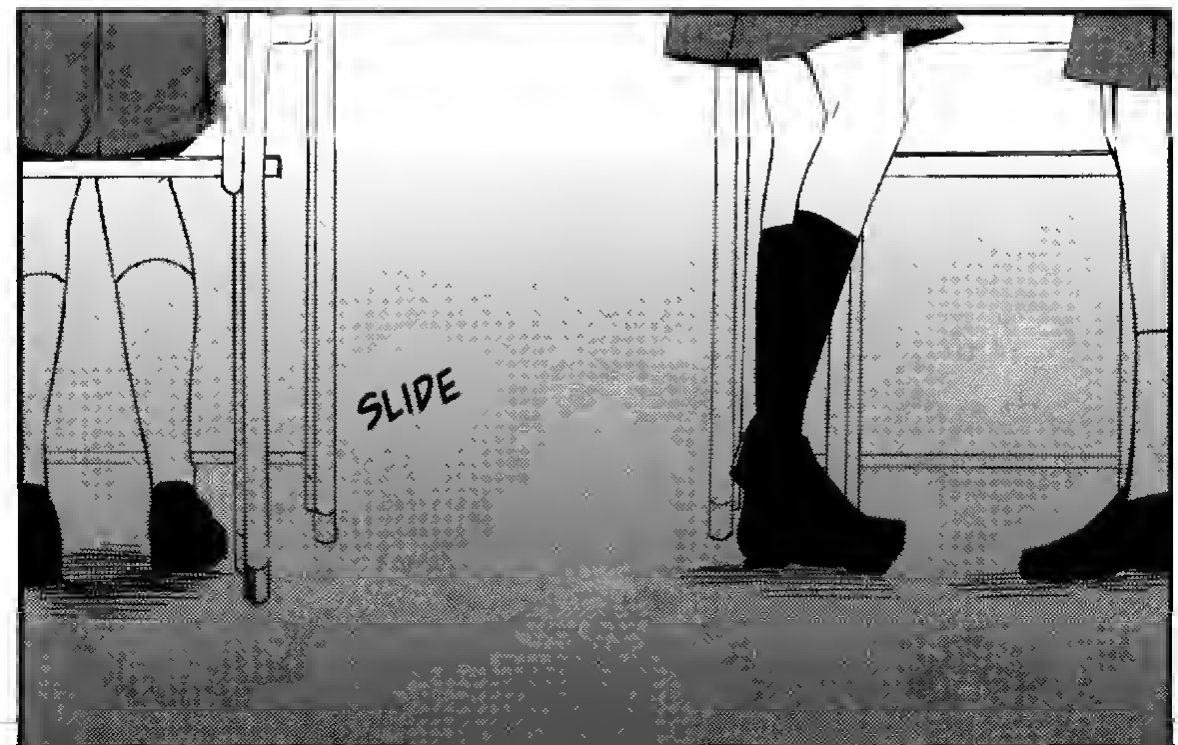

Starting today, I'm a middle school junior, huh...
TURN
AH!
SAKURA, THAT'S YOUR SEAT?

RIGHT NEXT TO MINE!


?
HEY, NATSUKI! ...
. . . . .
THIS MUST BE THE FIRST TIME WE'VE BEEN IN THE SAME CLASS SINCE... WHAT, KINDER-GARTEN!?
AND REALLY, EVEN THOUGH WE'RE IN THE SAME SCHOOL, IT SEEMS WE DON'T SEE EACH OTHER MUCH!

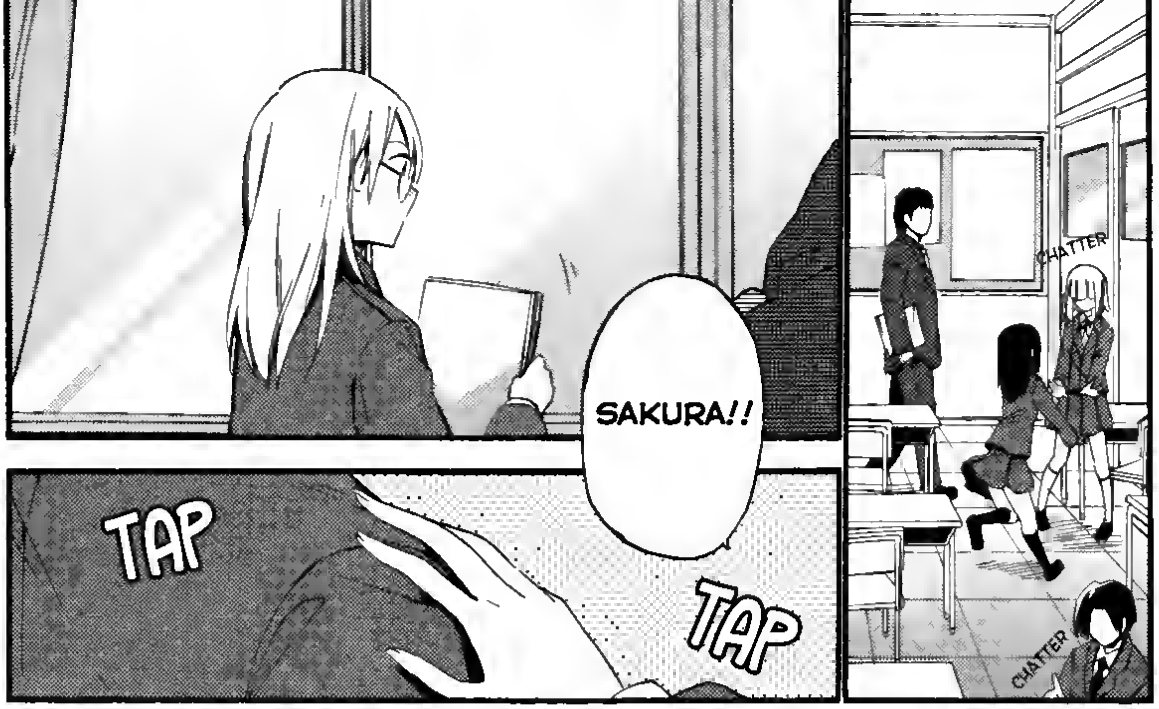





SLIDE

となりの

presented by rin


SAKURA!!
TAP
TAP
CHATTER
CHATTER

HEY HEY, HAVE YOU SEEN THESE RICE CRACKERS?
THEY WERE MAKING THEM ON TV YESTERDAY.

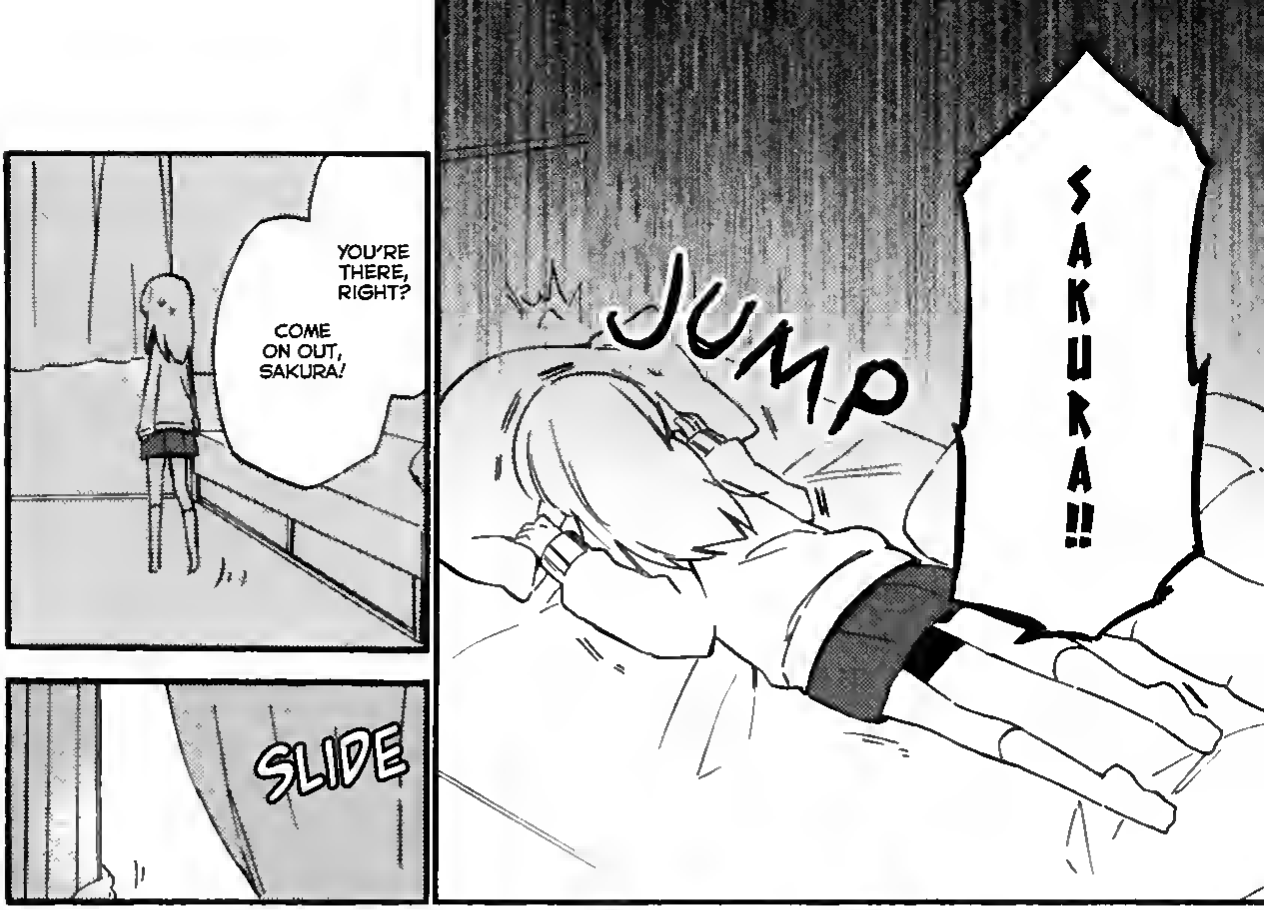
DON'T THEY LOOK DELICIOUS?
THEY WERE ON THAT ONE PROGRAM WITH KOMATSU AND THE OTHER ONE.

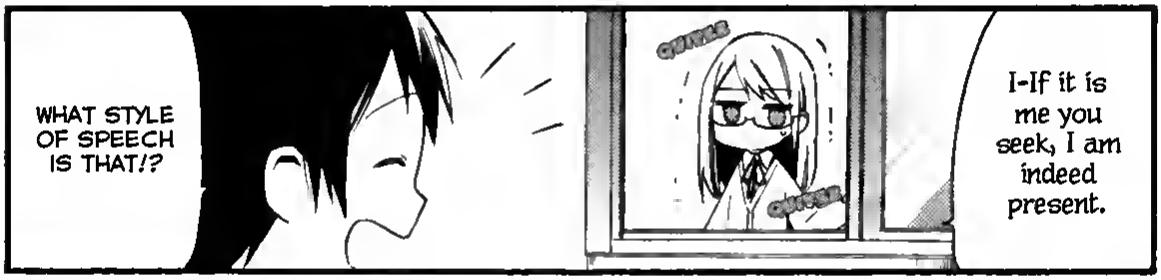
AND SO, I WAS THINKING, YOU KNOW THAT ONE STORE—
...UM,
I-I'M SORRY!
I... DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT!
CLATTER
DASH
EHHH!?
WAIT... SAKURA!?

THERE SHE WENT...
.....
DID I SAY SOMETHING STRANGE?
WHO KNOWS?
BUT, SO WAIT, NATSUKI... YOU'RE CLOSE WITH OGAWA-SAN?
EH? SURE, I MEAN...

...OUR HOUSES ARE RIGHT NEXT TO EACH OTHER.
EHHH!?
ARE THEY REALLY!?
GLODODDDM
AGHHHH

Without thinking, I ran a-way...
Nacchan...
Since the start of middle school, I've hardly spo-ken with her at all...
It's just my imagi-nation, but since she's with a different group of friends,
it feels like we've become really distant from each other.
Even though we live so near to each other...


SAKURA!!
JUMP
YOU'RE THERE, RIGHT?
COME ON OUT, SAKURA!
SLIDE

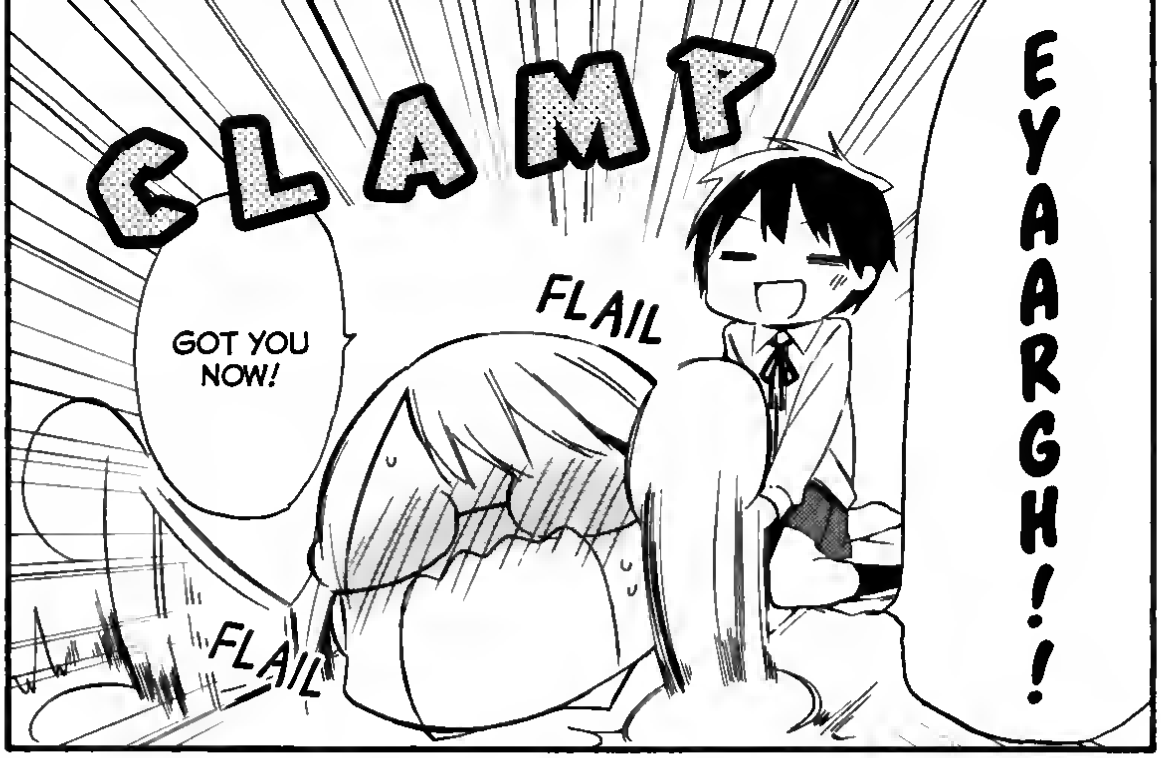

I-If it is me you seek, I am indeed present.
WHAT STYLE OF SPEECH IS THAT!?

HEY, SAKURA.
WHY ARE YOU AVOIDING ME?
EH...
I'M NOT AVOIDING YOU...
BUT AT SCHOOL, YOU WON'T TALK TO ME AT ALL!
THAT'S...

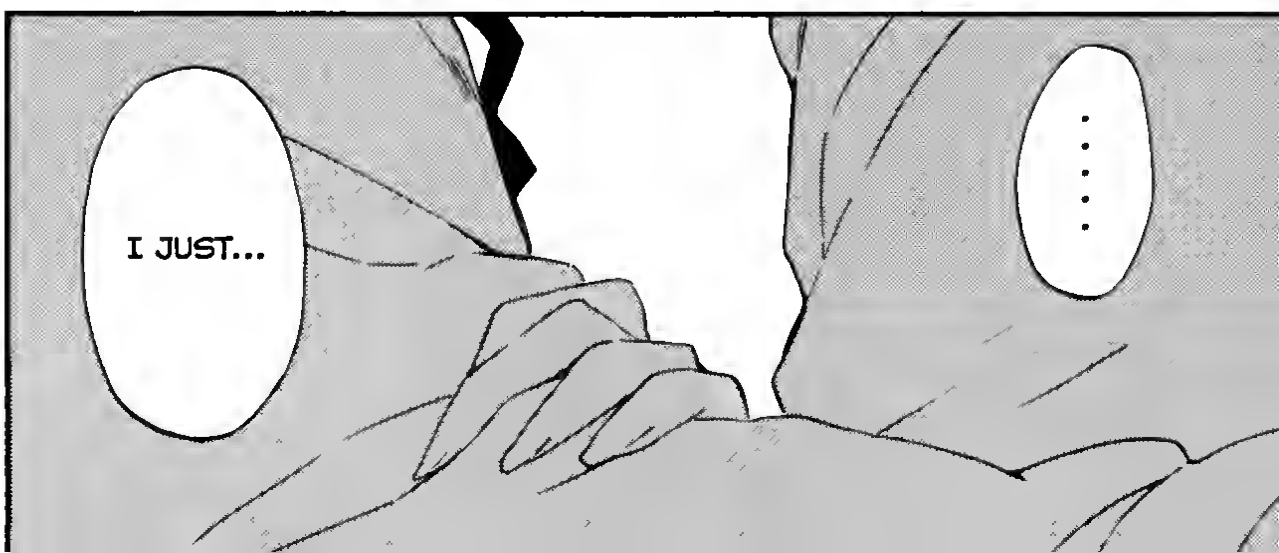
...NOTHING AT ALL.
PLEASE DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, NACCHAN.
I REFUSE!
. . . . .
LET'S TALK IT OUT.
I'M COMING OVER.
HUH?
DASH

!?
LAUNCH!
WAIT!
HOLD O–!!
WAI–

WHUMP
smirk


EYAARGH!!
CLAMP
FLAIL
GOT YOU NOW!
FLAIL

NOW THEN, SHALL I HAVE YOU SPILL IT ALL, BEGINNING TO END?
CLICK
THERE'S NOTHING!
I TOLD YOU, THERE'S NOTHING!
IF SO, WHAT HAPPENED TODAY WAS QUITE STRANGE, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?
SHINE
CERTAINLY DOESN'T SEEM LIKE NOTHING.
mumumu


I JUST...
.....

...THOUGHT, I'D PROBABLY ONLY GET IN THE WAY...
YOU'RE ALWAYS SURROUNDED BY FRIENDS, NACCHAN.
HAVING SOMEBODY LIKE ME WHO THEY DON'T KNOW AT ALL SUDDENLY MIXED IN WOULD KILL THE MOOD, I FIGURED.
AH, BUT! I'M NOT SAYING YOUR FRIENDS ARE TO BLAME OR ANYTHING!
IT'S JUST...

TACKLE
HYAA!
EH!?
HUH?
CREAK
THANK HEAVENS...
EH!?
NO, NO, NO! THAT'S IMPOS-SIBLE!
IN THAT CASE,
JUST BECOME FRIENDS WITH MY FRIENDS!

DON'T WORRY. I'M TELLING YOU!
SINCE IT'S YOU, SAKURA, IT'LL BE FINE!
Since we were little, she's always been pushy.
And never listened to a word I said.

LET'S PLAY!!
BUT WE'LL GET SCOLDED...
YARRRR!!
SHHH—
JUMP
FWUMPH
Every time, no matter what, she broke through to reach me.
HOW IS THIS SUPPOSED TO HIDE US?
But we're right in the open...
THIS WILL BE A SECRET PATH FOR JUST THE TWO OF US!

I loved Nacchan for being like that.
YOU REALLY HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL, NACCHAN.
EH... YOU THINK SO?

GRAB
!!!
-YO! AREN'T THESE THINGS A BIT HUGE!?
I FEEL LIKE I'VE GROWN A LITTLE MORE MATURE...

EVEN THOUGH I'M SO HOPELESSLY FLAT-CHESTED...
D-Don't touch them!!

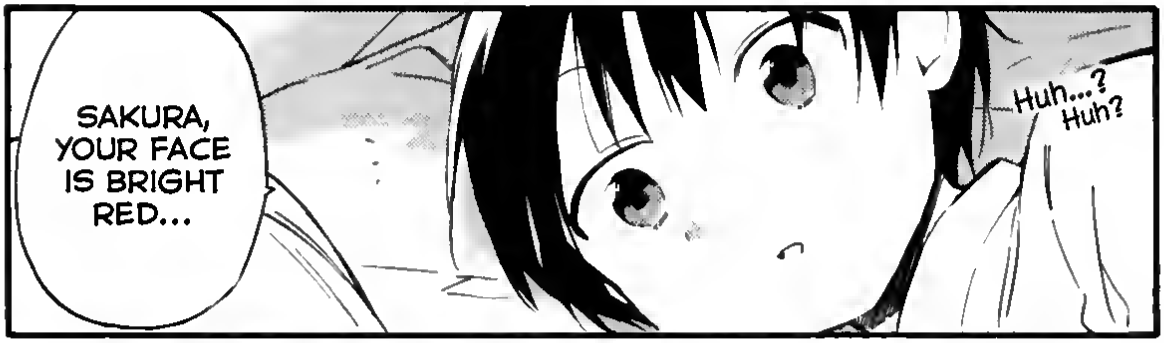
SAY!
STARTING TOMORROW, LET'S WALK HOME TOGETHER!

IT'S SOMETHING THAT BOTHERS ME TOO, ALL RIGHT...?
aughhh
thrash
thrash
HOW CAN YOU LEAVE ME BEHIND ON THE STAIRWAY TO ADULT-HOOD!!

We can't do that.
EHHHH? WHY NOT...?
BECAUSE I GO TO CRAM SCHOOL...
AHHH... I DID FIND IT STRANGE THAT WE HAD THE SAME ROUTE HOME BUT NEVER SAW EACH OTHER...
I SEE... HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAMS ARE JUST A YEAR AWAY...
HAVE YOU DECIDED WHERE YOU'LL TRY FOR?
PROBABLY EAST HIGH...
WHOA, THAT'S AMAZING! I'M LEANING TOWARDS A PRIVATE SCHOOL, I THINK.
YOU'LL BE GOING FAR AWAY, HUH...
WE CAN STILL MEET ANY TIME WE WANT!
If we could always—

Forever and ever,
stay by each other's side, just like this...

.....?
.....
CLEEENCH
Ha ha, as if that's possible...


SAKURA, YOUR FACE IS BRIGHT RED...
Huh...? Huh?

BLUSH
HEY, ARE YOU REALLY ALL RIGHT?
dum
dum
dum
...possibly be...

WHSH
AH!
I-IT'S NOTHING...

Could this...

I...
FWSSHHH
...might have fallen in love with the neighbor next-door.
SAKU-RA!
HEY, SAKU-RA!?
BANG!
MS. OGAWA, BIG TROUBLE!!
SAKURA'S FALLEN ILL!
N-NO... THAT'S NOT—
EEEH!?

END

TONARI NO

presented by rin

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GULF STANDARD
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